



**THE REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS AS
BLACK FEMINISTS IN *HIDDEN FIGURES* MOVIE**

A THESIS

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Bachelor Degree Majoring in American Studies in English Department
Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University**

Submitted by:

Destri Delastuti

13020113130046

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer honestly confirms that she complies this thesis by herself and without taking any results from other researches in S-1, S-2, S-3, and in diploma degree of any university. The writer ascertains also that she does not quote any material from other publications or someone's paper except from the references mentioned.

Semarang, July 2017

Destri Delastuti

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“When you see a person who has been given more than you in money and beauty, look to those, who have been given less.”

—*Prophet Muhammad*

“In three words I can sum up everything I’ve learned about life: it goes on.”

—*Robert Frost*

“Courage is the most important of all virtues, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently. You can practice any virtue erratically, but nothing consistently without courage.”

—*Maya Angelou*

This paper is dedicated to

My dearest family and

To everyone who helped me accomplished this thesis.

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Written by:

Destri Delastuti

NIM: 13020113130046

is approved by thesis advisor,

on July 7, 2017

Thesis Advisor,

Retno Wulandari, S.S., M.A.

NIP. 197505252005012002

Head of English Department

,

Dr. Agus Subiyanto, M.A.

NIP. 196408141990011001

VALIDATION

Approved by

Strata 1 Thesis Examination Committee

Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

On August 3, 2017

Chair Person

First Member

Sukarni Suryaningsih, S.S, M.Hum.

Arido Laksono, S.S, M.Hum.

NIP. 19721223 199802 2 001

NIP. 19750711 199903 1 002

Second Member

Third Member

Rifka Pratama, S.Hum, M.A

Dr. Nurhayati, M.Hum.

NIP. 19900428 011511 1 092

NIP. 19661004 199001 2 001

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Semarang, July 2017

Destri Delastuti

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ABSTRACT

As African-American experienced subjugation throughout the era of slavery, their status is ranked at bottom of the social ladder in American society. Such position relegates African-American women to sexism, racism, and classism as intersecting oppressions. In *Hidden Figures* movie, the condition of encountering gender, racial, and class oppressions that are intertwined in everyday life is portrayed in the female characters. Based on Patricia Hill Collins' critical social theory, the writer's purpose is to analyze the characters' consciousness-raising and relationship with other black women as well. It emerges that the African-American female characters also possess the characteristics and the thought of black feminist that arise to opposing actions. In conclusion, the representation of black feminist by the characters leads to the development of black women's orientation and African-American women empowerment which result to the improving life of the characters.

Keywords: African-American women, oppressions, black feminism, black feminist thought.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Women, as a part of society, have been stigmatized differently from men physically and intellectually due to the existing principle of male superiority. According to hooks, there is a condition where American women socially interact with racial and sexual imperialisms that are maintained and formed in white supremacy and patriarchy as a result of American history (1982:120). Thus, it emerges that the determinant of women inferiority is rooted from prevailing patriarchal society. The consequence of this is that a great number of women in society collectively can gain the opportunities to have choices, but in a very inadequate manner, leading to discrimination and exploitation. (hooks 1984, 5)

As stated before, racial imperialism takes part in constructing the foundation of American society. This is relatable with the condition of non-white women that might lead to the disproportional life of African-American women as Third World Women. In addition, bell hooks also acknowledges the circumstances causing African-American women's issues,

A devaluation of black womanhood occurred as a result of sexual exploitation of black women during slavery that has not altered in the course of hundreds of years. (hooks 1982, 53)

Apart from the disadvantages endured by all women in America because of the existence of patriarchy, the racial imperialism has allowed African-American women to be dehumanized as well. American history had already made it possible

to create the degrading life of African-American women as they were dissolved in a moment as devastating as slavery. In conclusion, it seems that the existence of racial imperialism formed by slave trading had caused the black and white women's unequal condition. The aftermath is that the clash between white and African-American women in the feminist movement cannot be avoided.

As a matter of fact, hooks clarifies that white women who dominated women's movement in the late 60s produced a belief that it was solely "their" movement (1982:136). However, African-American women who were urged to join this movement were confronted by white women's sexist and racist attitudes (hooks 1982:137). Consequently, realizing the racial treatment of white women in women's liberation movement, withdrawn attempt was committed by African-American women to create black feminist groups. (hooks 1982:150)

Feminism according to bell hooks as black female activist does not solely focus on the problems originated from patriarchal system, but it embraces the sexism, racism, and classism perpetuated by Western civilization as well. It also raises consciousness on U.S society reorganization in order to generate oneself to overcome imperialism. (1982:194-195)

One of American movies that draws attention to the issues of African-American women is *Hidden Figures*. According to official site 20th Century Fox, the movie is released in 2017 and is directed by Theodore Melfi. Based on true story, it revolves around three women of color, Kathrine G. Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson, who give big contribution to the first US spaceship launch in 1960s under NASA's auspices. Regardless of their superb roles in

supporting the successful space program, they also encounter multiple troubles in the segregation era in the 1960s. However, they render unbelievable deeds coming from their firmness and hidden intelligence.

Study by Stella Rose Que entitled *Sula's Character as a Representation of Black Feminist Spirit against Racism and Sexism* supports this research functioning as reference. It demonstrates how the character Sula tears down the wall of racial discrimination and systematic patriarchal society through her enthusiasm as feminist in the term of African-American women. The writer considers *Hidden Figures* as exceptional work due to the inspiring story of the “hidden figures”, contemplating the hardships of African-American women whose existence in the United States is regarded as minorities. Nevertheless, such situation never hampers them in gaining equality and depriving sexism, racism, and classism in which the issues intrigue the writer to find out more about black feminism.

1.2.Aims of the Study

The purpose of the study are:

1. To analyze the intrinsic elements of the movie such as characters, setting, and conflicts.
2. To elaborate the main characters' oppressions in the form of sexism, racism, and classism.
3. To identify the characteristics and the thought of black feminist reflected in the female characters.

1.3.Scope of the Study

In analyzing the paper, the writer will make a clear border in order to keep focusing on the direction of the research. The scope is to analyze the intrinsic and the extrinsic aspects of the movie. The intrinsic aspect consists of narrative elements such as characters, setting, conflict, and cinematographic elements. Moreover, in analyzing extrinsic aspect, the writer will focus black feminism concept reflected in *Hidden Figures* movie.

1.4.Methods of the Study

1.4.1. Methods of Research

In analyzing the movie, the writer uses library research to collect the data. Books, lecture materials, internet sources, and DVD are used as references to this research.

1.4.2. Methods of Approach

In this paper, the writer uses objective approach which is used to analyze the narrative elements such as character, setting, and conflict in the movie. Whereas, the cinematographic elements consist of the implied proximity to the camera, the angle of the camera, and sound. To analyze the extrinsic elements, the writer will examine the acts of main characters using black feminism theory and it is narrowed down to the more significant theory of Black Feminist Thought by Patricia Hill Collins. This theory pervades the consciousness-raising, accompanying African-American women's orientation about self.

1.5.The Organization of the Study

The paper consists of five different parts including introduction, summary of the movie, literary review, discussion, and conclusion that are put orderly in presenting the topic of the paper.

Chapter I INTRODUCTION

This chapter is composed by background of the study, aims of the study, scope of the study, methods of the study, and organization of the paper in which each part gives a glimpse about the paper.

Chapter II: SUMMARY OF THE MOVIE

This chapter contains the summary of *Hidden Figures* Movie

Chapter III: LITERARY REVIEW

This chapter consists of theoretical frameworks and theories that can be used as guidance and references for analyzing the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects.

Chapter IV: DISCUSSION

This chapter contains the data on the intrinsic aspects including theme, characters, setting (place, time), conflict (internal and external), and cinematography. For extrinsic aspect, the writer will analyze the black feminists' characteristics and thought reflected in female characters.

Chapter V: CONCLUSION

The third part is conclusion where the whole of the discussion and analysis is put together into short summary, containing the focus of the paper.

REFERENCE

CHAPTER 2

SUMMARY OF THE MOVIE

Based on true events, *Hidden Figures* highlights on a story about three outstanding colored women, Kathrine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson, in making a possible journey for John Glenn's spaceship launch regarded as the first American orbital exploration, trying to beat Russians in the space race. As the movie opens, it turns out the setting is set in White Sulphur Spring, West Virginia in 1926. Young Kathrine Johnson is enrolled with full scholarship in West Virginia Collegiate Institute, best school for Negroes in the state, accelerating two grades as she is considered as extraordinary ingenious student at her average age.

Several years later, in 1961, in Hampton, West Virginia, Kathrine, Dorothy, and Mary live in segregation era where they are confronted by prejudice, elaborating the unjust treatments comes from white people in their environment. At NASA office, the news about Russians launching their Korabl-Sputnik-4 satellite in orbit, becoming the first one that sends a human to space, makes the leaders examine it as a threat for Americans in case the satellite is in attempt to spy them. Therefore, it turns to be a trigger for the Space Task Group to overtake their lag. The department head, Al Harrison, discovers the calculating machine or so called IBM is not yet available to support their work. Instead, he urges the employees to find someone who excels at Analytic Geometry.

In a segregated area, West Computing Group, a number of colored women are hired as human computers, including Kathrine, Dorothy, and Mary. Dorothy

Vaughan plays her role as the head of colored computers division giving asks to her colleagues. While Mary Jackson is requested for the new permanent assignment as engineer assistant, Kathrine Johnson will be placed in Space Task Group as geometrical analyst by Dorothy's recommendation. Later, Dorothy reminds her boss, Vivian Mitchell, about her supervisor application as for a year, she plays role as one but neither is she given the permanent position nor the proper salary. However, Vivian seems to ignore her.

Mary Jackson starts her work in engineering department and witnesses the failure of wind testing of space capsule. The head of department, Karl Zielinski, asks for her rational opinion and feels amazed by her intelligence. He also supports her to be engineer instead of giving detention due to her race and sex. In another building, Kathrine is escorted by Vivian to the Space Task Division, telling her dos and don'ts while working in there. Entering the room, people point squinted gaze on her. Working at the building is also not too pleased for Kathrine as she is demeaned by her colleagues, Paul Stafford and Ruth, and she has to run for a half of mile to find the colored bathroom for minutes every day. Despite of the marginalization she endures, she keeps on doing excellent works until Al Harrison notices her.

At one moments, Kathrine is shipped by Dorothy and Mary to be involved in romantic relationship with Colonel Jim Johnson, whom later Kathrine marries to. Back at NASA, the spaceship "Friendship 7" launch program happens to be taken into account and prepared by the group as John Glenn is devoted to become the pilot. When the IBM machine has arrived, Dorothy feels threatened by it because

the career of colored women as computers will eventually end. However, the excellence at FORTRAN language makes Dorothy get opportunity to reassign for running IBM machine along with other girls. Meanwhile, Mary Jackson who previously petitions the court regarding to the enrollment on all-white school wins over it, espousing her to be the only colored woman who attends engineering night class. Approaching the Friendship 7 mission, Kathrine assures Paul and Al to calculate John Glenn's trajectory. It turns out that Paul attempts to cease her to show her quality as the conflict between them arises. However, she manages to prove that no one can underestimate her by keeping up with the current briefing that no woman can be involved in and demonstrate her precise calculation. Unfortunately, as the IBM machine performs its work, the role of Kathrine as geometrical analyst is replaced.

The day of John Glenn's mission launch, the world conforms to witness historical moment of the first American astronaut going around the earth. Meanwhile in the control room, a problem occurs when Al finds out that IBM calculation does not match yesterday's. To elude the failure, John Glenn suggests Kathrine to perpetrate the calculation for him. Hence, John Glenn succeeds to orbit around the earth and splash safely although there is a little tension during the reentry. The movie ends with the thread of accomplishments of Kathrine, Dorothy, and Mary.

CHAPTER 3

LITERARY REVIEW

3.1. Intrinsic Aspects

Intrinsic aspect is an essential feature that takes part in composing the literary work itself, consisting of narrative elements and cinematographic elements. In this study, narrative elements contain characters, setting, and conflict. Whereas, cinematographic elements include the implied proximity to the camera, the angle of the camera, and sound.

3.1.1. Narrative Elements

3.1.1.1. Setting

Setting is a major factor in the formulation of subject matter and a direct influence on the expression of the theme (Taylor 1981, 69). Setting can be said as the second most important element of a story. According to William F. Thrall and Addison Hibbard, settings encompass the actual location, the habitual manner of characters, the period of time, and the general environment, including characters' social and cultural background, religious and moral aspects, and psychological conditions. (1960:453)

3.1.1.2. Characters

According to James L. Potter characters are basic element in much imaginative literature, and therefore they merit the considerable attention paid to them (1967:1).

As fundamental part of literature, the term character is not merely about a person, but it conveys all attributes clinging to them, making the character is worth to notice. Moreover, the role of character is to express the exact idea of the story with the support of other existing aspects as Richard Taylor states,

A character is a mere construction of words meant to express an idea or view of experience and must be considered in relation to other features of the composition, such as action and setting, before its full significance can be appreciated. (1981:62)

Richard Barsam and Dave Monahan distinguish characters into two categories.

3.1.1.2.1. Major Character

In movie, the existence of major characters becomes a substantial part and in regard to this, the frequency of the characters' appearance is rather high. Major character which can be played by female or male actor is the fundamental aspect in creating and portraying occurrences in the story. Moreover, major characters are classified into protagonist and antagonist (2010:135). In this regard, they explain,

A protagonist can be a hero, and those heroes can either be good guys or bad guys in their struggle with whatever they oppose or that opposes them. (2010:135)

The main characters who play role as protagonist might be have either positive or negative personality in which their appearances are also contradicted by the existence of antagonist characters.

The antagonist is a character opposing the protagonist, and thus, in all likelihood, the one who provokes the protagonist's actions or reactions. (2010:135)

As stated before, the antagonist characters portray the evoking actions showing the opponency towards the protagonist character which usually lead to a conflict.

3.1.1.2.2. Minor Character

The minor character plays supporting role in the movie, so that the number of occurrences of this character is less in amount than the major character. Although the role of minor characters in a story is less essential, its appearances are taken into account in developing and supporting the major characters and the narrative's outcome. (2010:136)

3.1.1.3.Conflict

In order to analyze the entire aspects appeared in the movie, the writer also uses conflict as a tool to elaborate the focus of the study. The term conflict is familiar; it is the result of an opposition between at least two sides (Potter 1967, 25). The opponent views, ideas, preferences, and others of two or more characters in a story might lead to the conflict.

The conflict may be overt and violent, or implicit and subdued; it may be visible in action, or it may take place entirely in a character's mind; it may exist in different and sometimes contrasting forms, and on different levels of meaning; but by definition it is inherent in the concept of plot. (1967:25-26)

Excerpt above explains that conflict can be clearly seen in the surface of the story or it is just settled in characters' thought or feeling. It can be concluded that conflict can be categorized into external and internal conflict.

3.1.2. Cinematographic Elements

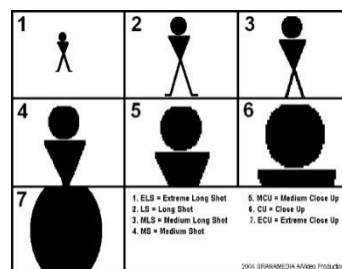
“Cinematography is the process of capturing moving images on film or a digital storage device” (Barsam & Monahan 2010, 208). The writer will use the implied proximity to the camera, the angle of the camera, and sound to analyze the cinematographic elements in *Hidden Figures* movie.

3.1.2.1. The Implied Proximity to the Camera

Barsam and Monahan reveal that there are at least seven generally known shots applied by the filmmaker in making a movie. The shots are taken in a considerable distance to capture the subject of the camera lens. The methods of shooting a scenes are mentioned,

The names of the most commonly used shots employed in a movie—extreme long shot, long shot, medium long shot, medium shot, medium close-up, close-up, and extreme close-up—refer to the implied distance between the camera lens and the subject being photographed. (2010:232)

The implied proximity to the camera is illustrated from the picture below and the explanation of the shots are in the following paragraphs which are put orderly based on the picture.



Picture 3.1 Types of Shots

Source:

https://readycamerashoot.files.wordpress.com/2009/09/shots_camera_basic-jpg.jpeg?w%5Cx3d570

3.1.2.1.1. Extreme Long Shot

Extreme long shot is, “Typically photographed at a great distance from the subject, that subject is often too small to be recognized, except through the context we see” (2010:232). This means that extreme long shot generally provides the overall scenery in one frame taken at a great distance. If the subject is included in the frame, this shot only presents the tiny detail of it

.

3.1.2.1.2. Long Shot

Long shot is a zoom mode of extreme long shot where the subject of the camera can be seen in a full shape. This shot also plays on the circumstances as the background where the subject is in as they described that, “We see the character’s full body (almost filling the frame but with some area above and below also visible) and some of the surroundings.” (2010:233)

3.1.2.1.3. Medium Long Shot

Medium Long Shot is, “Also known as the two-shot, the plan américain, or the American shot) is neither a long shot nor a medium shot, but one in between” (2010:233). Furthermore, medium long shot underscores the shot of one or more characters from head to knees with the background included.

3.1.2.1.4. Medium Shot

“A medium shot (MS), somewhere between the long shot and the close-up” (2010:233). Medium shot emphasizes on the subject seen in the frame from the top of the head to waist. This shot still has the background on the frame.

3.1.2.1.5. Medium Close-up

In medium close-up, the camera shoots the character’s head down to the chest, spotting on the character’s face. This shot “provides a view of the face that catches minor changes in expression and provides some detail about the character’s posture.” (2010:234)

3.1.2.1.6. Close-up

“The close-up (CU) is produced when the camera is shooting from very near to the subject” (2010:234). This shot shows the more detailed part of the subject, such as the shot of character’s full face.

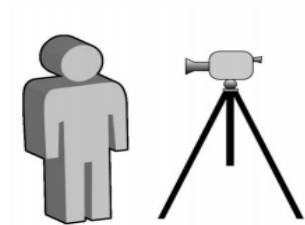
3.1.2.1.7. Extreme Close-up

“A variation on the close-up is the extreme close-up (XCU or ECU), which is a very close shot of some detail” (2010: 234). This shot displays the most detailed part of the subject in which it points on a zoom of the part of the face, such as mouth, eyes, or nose in one frame.

3.1.2.2. The Angle of the Camera

“The camera’s shooting angle is the level and height of the camera in relation to the subject being photographed” (2010:242). The angle of the camera is also essential in the making process of movie. It determines the level and height of the camera when the subject is shot. Barsam and Monahan categorized the angle of the camera into five types.

3.1.2.2.1. Eye Level



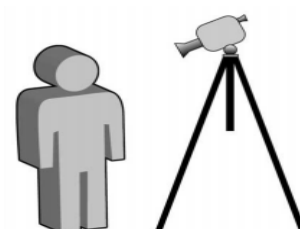
Picture 3.2 Eye Level

Source:

http://lrrpublic.cli.det.nsw.edu.au/lrrSecure/Sites/Web/docos/assess/documents/learning_04_tab01.pdf

An eye-level shot is made from the observer’s eye level and usually implies that the camera’s attitude toward the subject being photographed is neutral. (2010:242)

3.1.2.2.2. High Angle



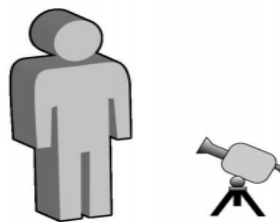
Picture 3.3 High Angle

Source:

http://lrrpublic.cli.det.nsw.edu.au/lrrSecure/Sites/Web/docos/assess/documents/learning_04_tab01.pdf

A high-angle shot is made with the camera above the action and typically implies the observer's sense of superiority to the subject being photographed. (2010:243)

3.1.2.2.3. Low Angle



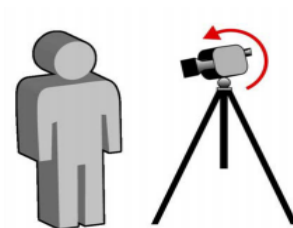
Picture 3.4 Low Angle

Source:

http://lrrpublic.cli.det.nsw.edu.au/lrrSecure/Sites/Web/docos/assess/documents/learning_04_tab01.pdf

A low-angle shot is made with the camera below the action and typically places the observer in the position of feeling helpless in the presence of an obviously superior force. (2010:243)

3.1.2.2.4. Dutch Angle



Picture 3.5 Dutch Angle

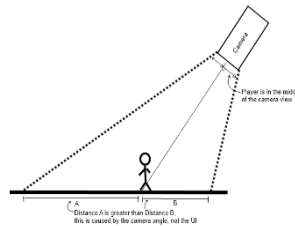
Source:

<http://lrrpublic.cli.det.nsw.edu.au/lrrSecure/Sites/Web/docos/assess/documents/>

In a Dutch-angle shot (also called a Dutch-tilt shot or oblique-angle shot), the camera is tilted from its normal horizontal and vertical position so that it is no longer

straight, giving the viewer the impression that the world in the frame is out of balance. (2010:244)

3.1.2.2.5. Aerial View



Picture 3.6 Aerial View

Source: <http://i.imgur.com/fQzABuo.png>

An aerial-view shot (or bird's-eye-view shot), an extreme type of point-of-view shot, is taken from an aircraft or very high crane and implies the observer's omniscience. (2010:246)

3.1.2.3. Sound

In movie, sound is assumed as the element of cinematography that is as significant as the motion pictures by which sound sometimes can be more demonstrative portraying the story. Barsam and Monahan break down the types of sound into four general categories including vocal sounds (dialogue and narration), environmental sound (ambient sound, sound effect, Foley sound), music, and silence (2010:379). Nevertheless, the writer will focus only on the vocal sound, particularly dialogue.

3.1.2.3.1. Dialogue

Dialogue is defined mostly as a conversation between two or more persons that usually can be interpreted differently based on the audience's point of view.

Additionally, dialogue in the filmmaking is broadly described as,

Dialogue is a function of plot because it develops out of situations, conflict, and character development. Further, it depends on actors' voices, facial expression, and gestures and is thus, also product of acting. (Barsam & Monahan 2010, 379)

In other words, dialogue is not merely a conversation, but it involves the expressive feeling and thought the character convey through voices and physical movements that bring up the evolving story.

3.2. Extrinsic Aspects

As stated before, women of color, particularly African-American women confront multiple suppressions as they are deemed as the Third World women in which the aberrations committed by the subjected people reckon three fundamental base points clinging to their natural being as colored women, including their sex, their race, and their class. In responding to the oppression, African-American women take revolutionary acts to repel subjugation by presenting black feminist thought.

3.2.1. Black women's Oppressions

3.2.1.1. Sexism

According to hooks, the term sexism concerns to relation between men and women which is mostly about manifestation of male domination, accompanying discrimination, exploitation, and oppression (1984:47). From sociological view, the

legitimation of discrimination is based on a systematic belief of one sex superiority relating to gendered view on masculine or feminine roles and behaviors. (Newman 2010, 184)

Inequality in male-dominated societies results in shaping people's thoughts and perception towards women, affecting social interaction and spreading to the organization of social institutions (Newman 2010, 184). In other words, sexism can be expressed personally or it occurs as institutional sexism. The belief of sexism in individuals appears throughout everyday actions which manifest in social interaction involving gestures and communication patterns. In more broadly scope, institutional sexism is practically started from families, then in other spheres such as in education, health care, economy, and law. (Newman 2010, 199)

The concrete situation of sexism in common society which is marked by the existence of patriarchy embraces male-dominated principle. Thus, patriarchal society is deemed as the root of existing sexist views in America in which, "Men of all races in America bond on the basis of their common belief that a patriarchal social order is the only viable foundation for society" (hooks 1982, 99). This viewpoint reinforces the gender inequality as the nature of sexes.

In fact, while white women are placed below the white male supremacy, the position of African-American women is more doomed due to the subordination of both white and black men. The social status of African-American women is shaped by colonization in historical events of slavery. Consequently, it continually permeates to systematic ordered social groupings in American society. This is evidently proved by hooks statement saying that,

As far back as slavery, white people established social hierarchy based on race and sex that ranked white men first, white women second, though sometimes equal to black men, who are ranked third, and black women last. (1982:52-53)

Relating to the status of African-American women, there is the existing interrelation of gender and race going along with gender inequality. The work of Kane notes that, contrasting to the white women, African-American women are more aware in gender inequality and they believe that it is provoked by social factors rather than biological matters. As consequence, African-American women happen to be struggling more to minimize gender inequality by supporting social policy and taking actions to improve women's status. (Wharton 2005, 224)

3.2.1.2. Racism

Racism is linked to ideas and treatments that emphasize on the inferiority of other racial or ethnic groups to one's own group in intellectual, cultural, and social values to one's own group (Andersen & Taylor 2013, 232). In other words, the existence of racism in society is rooted, provoked, and then developed by the racists' belief that their racial and ethnic characteristics are more prevailing, constructing racial hierarchy.

According to Newman, racism can be perpetrated personally in quiet or overt manner by establishing a belief or an action. However, there is another form of racism that is considered as less visible but seriously dangerous which is taken place in society and privileges them who have power, namely institutional racism (2010:173). Institutional racism constitutes the form of unjust treatments and oppressions in social institutions and it is addressed to inferior groups. Thus, this

kind of racism is marked by the power of dominant group in economic and political section, deliberately intending to subdue the oppressed group (Andersen & Taylor 2013, 232). In conclusion, both forms of racism justify prejudice, stereotype, and discrimination against inferior racial groups, but it differs in the agents who commit those racial practices.

Based on hook specific explanation about racism in the case of black and white people, the term is synonymously related to the discrimination or prejudice against black people by white people (1982:119). In fact, America is a country that deeply imbeds and implements the white-racist foundation.

The United States was originally built as a white-racist republic. It was a principle part of the world racist order created by Europeans colonialism and imperialism to enrich Europeans and impoverish indigenous peoples. (Feagin 2001, 66)

The everyday life of African-Americans is to confront such disadvantages and disproportions in the privileged white society personally or institutionally. The predisposition of being treated unjustly is derived from the historical era of slavery. As Feagin claims that, “The current U.S racial situation is very much the legacy of black enslavement, and the badges and disabilities of slavery still lie heavily on black Americans” (2001:67). Nevertheless, black women fundamentally encounter gendered racism, accompanying double burden for being black and being female that generates typical prejudice and stereotype. (Feagin 2001, 112)

3.2.1.3. Classism

Classism is socio-economic and class-based beliefs and treatments towards others, reflecting dissimilar levels which appears in individual, institutions, and culture. It

also refers to inequality in economic system causing imbalance of basic human needs. (gustavus.edu/reslife/documents/Classism.doc)

As a matter of fact, classism in America pointedly goes along with economic conditions and racial matters as hooks states that, “In the United States, one’s class standing then is always determined by racial factors as well as economic factors” (2000:135). As for African-Americans, such situations give great influence to them in living their life because the intersection of class and race leads them to social and economic problems. It exemplifies in the form of stigma and social standing. Such situations underscore them as the most underprivileged human beings in which hooks notes that, “Women of all races and black people of both genders are fast filling up the ranks of poor and disenfranchised” (2000:8). Thus, the hierarchy of class is observed as purposely benefited action to maintain the privileged whites. On the other hand, its existence also aims to deny the access of opportunity of U.S Black people as the classified group in all aspects of life, primarily in economic sector.

3.2.2. Black Feminism

According to bell hooks, African-American women’s lack of participation in the women’s liberation movement was derived from two major causes. Initially, it was caused by the position of women in the 60s black movement that were placed in a submissive level, so they were assumed to cast out feminism. Therefore, in white women’s liberation, African-American women were opposed by existing racial and

class arrangement (1982:187). Consequently, black feminism evolved from the consideration that,

In fact, black female reform organization were solidly rooted in the women's movement. It was in reaction to the racism of white women and to the fact that the U.S remained a society with an apartheid social structure that compelled black women to focus on themselves rather than all women (hooks 1982, 164)

The recognition of racism as a structure in the women's movement and in the U.S society relegates them to reform their organization which emphasizes solely on themselves rather than all women. As stated before, two considerations of sexism in black movement and racism as well as classism issues in white women's movement lead them to the exclusion from both movement. It might be the initial development of black feminism with the aim is to eradicate sexism, racism, and classism.

Moreover, black feminism is defined in more broadly scope. It pertains to the thought that encompasses the self-consciousness raising through empowerment of women and men in order to establish the humanist society (Collins 2000, 416). However, it is argued by black feminist intellectuals who can be called as black feminist. Thus, there are some characteristics that may be inherent in people who are suitable for being called black feminist.

All African-American women, according to Patricia Bell Scott, are taken into consideration as black feminist due to the life experience living as blacks and it likely generates black feminist consciousness. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, on the other hands, acknowledges that African-American women and men are possible to be called as black feminist as she points Frederick Douglass and W.E.B Dubois as

examples of black male feminist. Most of black women intellectuals' works also adhere biological aspect to the ideology, contrasting with the idea that the term black feminist can be ascribed by anyone with black feminist ideas (Collins 2000, 404). In short, two main characteristics of black feminists include the notions that they have to be African-American women who encounter life as being black and being female and they have black feminist consciousness, sensibility, and ideas.

Bringing black feminism to the next level, African-American women labeled as black feminist continues to the ideas known as black feminist thought (Collins 2000, 406). Black feminist thought was elaborated by Patricia Hill Collins as critical social theory in which it focuses on empowering U.S Black women who undergo unfair treatments originated from intersecting oppression (2000:22). The theory pervades core themes revolving around the complexity of U.S Black feminist ideas. Rather, black women's relationship with one another and consciousness as a sphere of freedom are selected core themes required in analyzing the movie.

3.2.2.1. Black women's Relationship with One Another

According to Collins, the relationship of black women with one another is recognized as one of the three safe spaces (in Black churches and in Black women's organization during slavery). It is formed in the relationship between friends and in the family interactions which are considered as informal and private dealings among the individuals (2000:102).

Black solidarity, the belief that Blacks have common interest and should support one another, has long permeated Black women's political philosophy. (2000:31)

It is relatable that common interest of African-American women can establish black solidarity as they should support each other. In such circumstances, “...Black women being the ones who really listen to one another is significant, particularly given the importance of voice in African-American women’s life” (Collins 2000: 103). It can be assumed that African-American women must acknowledge the power they have if they bind together as one united by the same problems because, “...African-American women as sisters and friends affirm one’s another humanity, specialness, and right to exist” (Collins 2000, 102). The strong bond of black women is underlie by the recognition that, “Each knew that only another African-American women could fully understand how it feels to be treated that way and to respond in kind.” (Collins 2000, 103-104)

3.2.2.2. Consciousness as A Sphere of Freedom

Black women’s hidden space of consciousness has been examined by U.S. Black women intellectuals in which it constitutes the inside idea enabling African-American women to outgrow and beat the intersecting oppression of race, class, gender, and sexuality (Collins 2000, 98).

Collins declares that black solidarity is regarded as one of sites that provides safe space to foster the thought of African-American in everyday life in which it gives African-American women intellectuals ideas and experiences with the new meaning. Thus, it can be used by African-American women as effective tools to struggle against African-American women’s controlling images (2000: 111-112). The ideas, according to her, which are developed in the safe space comprise the

importance of self definition, self-valuation and respect, self-reliance and independence, as well as self, change, and personal empowerment.

3.2.2.2.1. The Importance of Self-Definition

Self-definition is a form of consciousness-raising. It is the key to individual and group empowerment (Collins 2000, 413). The objective of self-definition is not the identity, but it is rather about the concerns in the process of self-definition. This process constitutes the understanding African-American women's personal life that has been constructed by racism, sexism, and classism as intersecting oppressions (Collins 2000, 114).

In fact, the progress of self-definition can be useful to challenge the controlling images of African-American women (Collins 2000, 114). Furthermore, Collins also emphasizes on self-definition that also concerns the power used by African-American women in defining themselves.

By insisting on self-definition, Black women question not only what has been said about African-American women but the credibility and the intentions of those possessing the power to define. When Black women define ourselves, we clearly reject the assumption that those in position granting them authority to interpret our reality are entitled to do so. Regardless of the actual content of Black women's self-definitions, the act of insisting on Black female's self definition validates Black women's power as human subjects. (2000:114)

3.2.2.2.2. Self-Valuation and Respect

The politics of black feminism believe in the value of African-American women, so that the liberation matters to fulfill their needs as independent humans. (Collective, americanstudies.yale.edu). U.S Black women should aware of the

value of their selves in which it might generate self-respect. Tate in Collins claims that, “Women must assume responsibility for strengthening their self-esteem by learning to love and appreciate themselves” (2000:115). In society, while African-American women are not bestowed with respectful treatment, they remind their selves to have self-respect and in turn to ask for respect of others. (2000:116)

3.2.2.2.3. Self-Reliance and Independence

African-American women are believed to carry the spirit of independence which is derived from their selves or their circumstances. They choose to be self-reliant and this self-orientation have encouraged one another in the sphere of black womanhood to challenge the common notion of their femininity (2000:116). Obviously, the ability of relying on their selves is derived from the struggle of African-American women in surviving from their life experience in which it benefits the people around them, including men and children. (2000:157)

3.2.2.2.4. Self, Change, and Personal Empowerment

In this point, self, change, and personal empowerment are correlated within the context of parallel relation. This means that when black woman is conscious about contradictions in the society, the changed consciousness encourages her to change the condition of her life by performing actions (2000:117). On the other hand, personal empowerment through changed consciousness is a commitment to have self-knowledge. (2000:118)

CHAPTER 4

THE REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS AS BLACK FEMINISTS IN *HIDDEN FIGURES* MOVIE

4.1. Analysis of Intrinsic Aspects

In analyzing intrinsic aspects of *Hidden Figures*, the writer will examine the aspects that are explicitly shown in the movie such as the settings, the characters, and the conflicts that are grouped in the narrative elements. Cinematography is accounted for analyzing the cinematic aspect used for supporting the movie, covering the proximity and the angle of camera as well as the dialogues.

4.1.1. Narrative Elements

4.1.1.1. Settings



Picture 4.1 Mass demonstrating about ending segregation (00:49:13)



Picture 4.2 President John F. Kennedy giving speech (01:07:53)



Picture 4.3 John Glenn's successful landing (01:57:16)

The setting of time occurs in two major periods, portraying the progressing life of the main characters. The time is mentioned as the movie begins with the past life of Kathrine Johnson in 1926. Later, it is clearly known that the present time is in 1960s. This will be proved by several happenings that point to the movie's setting of time. Picture 4.1 which uses close-up shot and eye level angle shows there is a

mass gathered yelling and carrying a board saying provoking things about ending segregation. It indicates an event called American Civil Rights Movement that indeed happened around the 1960s. This occurrence is strengthened by Carson statement saying that, “Through nonviolent protest, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s broke the pattern of public facilities’ being segregated by “race” in the South...” (Carson, britannica.com/event/American-civil-rights-movement). Based on true events, *Hidden Figures* shows scenes that actually happen in the past time through original footages of newsworthy occurrences. It can be seen from the Picture 4.2. The scene taken in medium close up and eye level angle presents the footage of the 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy giving a speech responding to Alan Shepard and Freedom 7 launching to the space on May 5, 1961. Moreover, the footage of successful mission prepared by NASA for John Glenn’s Friendship 7 orbit flight in 1962 is captured in Picture 4.3 taken in medium shot and eye level angle. In other words, the story revolves around the factual happenings in the United States of America around the 1960s.



Picture 4.4 Young Kathrine walking down the woods (00:01:00)



Picture 4.5 The situation in Space Task Group (00:19:15)



Picture 4.6 The situation in West Computing Group (01:43:02)

Hidden Figures takes places in two different major places as well. Firstly, West Virginia is where Kathrine Johnson spent her childhood life in 1920 as Kathrine’s teacher has conversation with her parents about the school she is urged

to attend, “West Virginia Collegiate Institute is the best school for Negroes in the state (*Hidden Figures*, 00:01:00-00:01:02) . Also, in Picture 4.4 using extreme long shot and eye level angle, there is young Kathrine holding tight her book while walking on a small path in White Sulphur Springs wood to the school. Then, the setting of place where adult Kathrine, Dorothy, and Mary now live is in Hampton. It can be clearly seen as Mary mentions it when she drives the car escorted by the police to office with Kathrine and Dorothy, “Three negro women are chasing a white police officer down the highway in Hampton, Virginia, 1961” (*Hidden Figures*, 00:06:40-00:06:46). As the movie recounts about the figures who take part in a successful spaceship launching program, the settings mostly set at NASA office. Picture 4.5 which is taken in extreme long shot and eye level angle showing the NASA’s Space Task Group office at the east group where Kathrine works as geometry analyst surrounded by male white colleagues. Meanwhile, the picture 4.6 taken in extreme long shot and eye level angle indicates a different circumstances where black women computers do their jobs in West Computing Group which is segregated with the main office.



Picture 4.7 The employees welcoming the astronauts (00:38:20)



Picture 4.8 The teapot labeled colored (01:39:27)



Picture 4.9 Black people praying at the church (00:32:28)

Besides the setting of time and place, the movie also portrays the setting of general environment which includes the social and cultural background as well as

the religious life of the characters. *Hidden Figures* revolves around three African-American women who work at NASA. Consequently, the circumstances are taken into account to shape their social life and cultural background. Being an employee at NASA is assumed as a white-collar job in which it means that the people come from a highly educated background. The speculation is continued to the social class they are ascribed. Kathrine, Dorothy, and Mary are perceived as middle-class and well-educated African-American women. This can also be proved by their appearance while working. Picture 4.7, which is taken in a long shot and eye level angle, depicts three of them welcoming the astronauts. They are sophisticated in style, wearing sleek woman suits with pearls and simple jewelry, such as necklaces, earrings, and brooches. However, they also have to bear sexism, racism, and classism in the office. One example is in Picture 4.8, taken in a long shot and high angle, exposing the drinking set which is provided in the Space Task Group office. There is a pot labeled 'colored' which is addressed solely to Kathrine. This indicates that workers at NASA embed racism as their culture in the office. Kathrine, Dorothy, and Mary also demonstrate their religious life as can be perceived in Picture 4.9, taken in an extreme long shot and high angle. The picture shows the situation of black people, including three of them, having Sunday prayer in the church.

4.1.1.2. Characters

4.1.1.2.1. Major Characters

4.1.1.2.1.1. Kathrine Johnson



Picture 4.10 Young Kathrine explaining her calculation (00:02:27)



Picture 4.11 Kathrine writing her calculation (00:42:47)



Picture 4.12 Kathrine interacting with her daughters (00:30:02)

Kathrine Johnson is African-American women whose age is about 45 years old. She is a genius whose intelligence is recognized and praised by people around her. The miraculous gift shows that she is superior than her average age since she was a little girl. In picture 4.10 using medium shot and eye level angle, young Kathrine is supposed to solve difficult mathematics and she successfully unravels the equation which makes the older students and the teacher amazed by her ability. Adult Kathrine today works as geometry analyst for supporting the space launching program at Space Task Group. Picture 4.11 which uses medium shot and eye level angle shows Kathrine does the calculation for Redstone Rocket Trajectory on office's blackboard. Independent, tough, and restful are characteristics that describe her fully. Her independence is a portrayal of her status as widowed woman, but indeed she is very fond of her little girls. This can be seen from the Picture 4.12 taken in long shot and eye level angle, depicting Kathrine as an extremely caring and well-natured mother while explaining about her new job with apologetic tones to her three daughters.

4.1.1.2.1.2. Dorothy Vaughan



Picture 4.13 Dorothy giving task to colored computers (00:10:48)



Picture 4.14 The portrait of Dorothy's family (00:51:07)



Picture 4.15 Dorothy talking to Vivian Mitchell (00:12:09)

Dorothy is a middle-aged woman. She occupies a position as the head of colored computers at West Computing Group at NASA office. Picture 4.13 using extreme long shot and eye level angle shows that as the leader of the division, she announces the task for every girls in the room. In the movie, as acting supervisor, she always portrays her leadership to other black sisters as she frequently plays role to advocate her employees. She excels at FORTRAN language programming and masters at IBM operation. This brings her to her official title a year later. She lives with her husband and children. The picture 4.14 taken in medium shot and eye level angle reveals the portrait of Dorothy's family. Dorothy depicts herself as a risk-taker, brave, and explicit woman in front of people. This can be seen from the Picture 4.15 which is captured in medium long shot with eye level angle. In the picture, she has conversation with her boss, Vivian. She persistently requests her application for permanent position as supervisor to be taken into account, but unfortunately the opportunity is denied by her due to the status of black employees as temporary workers.

4.1.1.2.1.3. Mary Jackson



Picture 4.16 Mr. Zielinski explaining about the capsule (00:14:30)



Picture 4.17 Mary proposing petition to the court (01:10:48)



Picture 4.18 Mary having conversation with Levi (00:34:17)

Mary Jackson is apparently in her early 40s and is the youngest one among the two. Aside from being computer, Mary's role at NASA is to assist Mr. Zielinski in testing capsule prototype. Picture 4.16 using medium long shot and high angle technique shows her and Mr. Zielinski discussing about the capsule failure attempt. She is considered as the boldest character in the movie. She is straight-forward, rather cynical woman who always speaks out her thought. This is indicated by Kathrine's comment on her, "Nobody wants to go jail behind your mouth" (*Hidden Figures*, 00:04:15). In the movie, Mary always commits to everything she believes. Picture 4.17 in low angle shot is functioned to build Mary's character as confident, strong, and vibrant person when she makes petition on the court in order to be able to enroll in all-white school as requirement for engineer training program. She stands out in arguing with other people as well, including her husband. In picture 4.18 which uses medium close-up and eye level angle, she argues with Levi about her dream to be a female engineer, compelling her will to get anything she wants without considering her race and gender. Later, Mary with her intelligence and confidence succeeds in accomplishing her goal as first African-American female engineer.

4.1.1.2.2. Minor Characters

4.1.1.2.2.1. Paul Stafford



Picture 4.19 Paul leading the employees in the gathering (01:17:56)



Picture 4.20 Paul startled (00:08:50)



Picture 4.21 Paul giving task (0:40:05)

Paul is the lead engineer of Space Task Group. He checks everyone's math before Kathrine handles his task. Picture 4.19 showing Paul guiding his employees in the discussion about the orbital mission of John Glenn is taken in medium shot and eye level angle. He is arrogant and bossy one, but he is considered as reckless person. This can be seen from the Picture 4.20 taken in medium close-up and eye level angle, Paul is startled as the administrator objects to Paul's thoughtless comment on Russia's achievement. He characterizes himself as one of the characters who is always contrasted with Kathrine Johnson. It can be proved by the treatments he brings about in a form of acts of underestimating Kathrine. Picture 4.21 which is taken in medium shot captures overweening expression while saying Kathrine has no clearance to look complete files. Furthermore, low perspective that is shot below Paul's chin purposes to deliver to the audience that he is an oppressor.

4.1.1.2.2.2. Vivian Mitchell



Picture 4.22 Vivian winced informing to Dorothy about her application (00:12:23)



Picture 4.23 Vivian escorting Kathrine to Space Task Group (00:16:10)



Picture 4.24 Vivian talking to Dorothy in friendly expression (01:50:07)

The character representations of Vivian Mitchell are self-centered, cynic, and persistent. She supervises the colored computers in West Computing Group division. In taking control, she is considered as having bad leadership because she does not seem to like working with them. The proof is that she always gives sassy comments relating to the black computers and their circumstances. In that case, she implies herself that she is bothered to have herself go to West Computing Group by saying, “Didn’t think I’d come all the way down here” (*Hidden Figures*, 00:11:52-00:11:53). Moreover, her attitudes towards black employees are mostly manifestation of prejudice and discrimination. Picture 4.22 showing disturbed facial expression as she winces while speaking with Dorothy is captured in medium close-up and eye level angle. While Picture 4.23 using medium long shot and eye level angle reveals her escorting Kathrine to Space Task Group, giving her working instructions which emphasize racism. Nevertheless, Vivian’s manner gradually changes. It can be seen from Picture 4.24 in eye level angle and medium close shot which shapes different personality through her friendly expression while having an unusual conversation with Dorothy as her words are tenderly spoken.

4.1.1.3. Conflict

4.1.1.3.1. External Conflict

The characters' external conflict happens as the opponents hamper their progress, primarily in advancing to the next steps. In this occasion, Mary Jackson endures such issue in the office. She applies for engineer training program suggested by Mr. Zlelinski, but when Mary, Dorothy, and Kathrine sit on colored section cafeteria, Vivian announces that Mary is not qualified for the requirement as she only has degree in mathematics and physical science. Thus, the conflict aroused between them can be seen from the dialogue below.

Vivian: We now require advanced extension courses through the University of Virginia. It's in the employee handbook. In addendum. In case you haven't read it.

Mary: Every time we have a chance to get ahead, they move the finish line.

Vivian: I just follow the rules around here and I expect everyone who works for me to follow them as well. There are no special circumstances for anyone. You all should be thankful you have jobs at all.

(Hidden Figures, 00:47:00-00:47:21)

As stated in the excerpt, Mary subjects to the new rules about extension courses as a mean that she has to deal with new problem. Responding to Mary's contemptuous comment, Vivian replies in anger, saying rude things to them. To be clear, through Vivian Mitchell, NASA which is committed to racist system at that time denies their goals and it clearly results to the clash between Vivian Mitchell and the computers. Furthermore, when Kathrine Johnson forces to attend Pentagon meetings because she needs to know the current data for John Glenn launch, Paul Stafford prevents her. This leads to the conflict which is proved by the dialogue below.

Kathrine: If I could attend the briefings. I'd be more useful to the project
 Paul: Pentagon briefings are closed doors.
 Kathrine: Yes, but if we don't have the information of the changes, we can't keep up. I need those changes as they occur. As you said, it's a pin head.
 Paul: Kathrine, that's the job. You asked for this assignment, so just calculate with what you have. Or we'll find someone who can.
 (*Hidden Figures*, 01:18:42-01:19:03)

The conversation between Paul Stafford and Kathrine is conflicted actions because there is opposing views between two of them. Moreover, as she persists to join the meeting, Paul heats up and threatens her that she will lose her job.

4.1.1.3.2. Internal Conflict

Mary Jackson is confronted by a choice whether she can uplift her life by following her passion to be an engineer. The perplexing thoughts strike her as the head of engineer division, Mr. Zlelinski, proposes her to be female engineer.

Mr. Zlelinski: There is another opening in the Engineer training program.
 Mary: Flat head rivets would reduce wind drag.
 Mr. Zlelinski: Mary, a person with engineer's mind should be an engineer. You can't be a computer the rest of your life.
 Mary: Mr. Zlelinski, I'm a Negro woman. I'm not gonna entertain the impossible.
 Mr. Zlelinski: And I'm a Polish Jew whose parents died in a Nazi prison camp. Now, I'm standing beneath a spaceship that's going to carry an astronauts to the stars. I think we can say we are living the impossible. Let me ask you. if you were a white male, would you wish to be an engineer?
 Mary: I wouldn't have to. I'd already be one.
 (*Hidden Figures*, 00:15:07-00:15:47)

The dialogue above implies that Mary initially is uncertain and refuses the thought about being an engineer by distracting his points. However, Mr. Zlelinski supports her fully as he believes in a person with genius mind like Mary deserves better than being a computer. Later, Mary admits that it is her race and gender that

hinder her to accomplish such impossible goal. Rather, Mr. Zlelinski explains why Mary should not have that kind of thought because Mr. Zlelinski himself whose past is tragic has already succeeded in confronting the impossible in life. He also emphasizes on the willingness of Mary for being an engineer by presupposing her to be white male. However, Mary asserts she does not have to be male and white to reach beyond the bounds of possibility. All this sayings mention that Mary performs a changing mind, indicating she has conflicted thought inside her.

4.2. Analysis of Extrinsic Aspects

In this point, the writer will analyze the extrinsic aspects which implicitly depicted by the characters in the movie. This analysis is generalized to black feminism as the core of the analysis. Therefore, it is narrowed to the black women's oppression, namely sexism, racism, and classism as well as the characteristics and the thought of black feminists, including consciousness as a sphere of freedom and black women's relationship with one another. These aspects will be used to prove that Kathrine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan, and Mary Jackson are black feminists.

4.2.1. Black women's Oppression

4.2.1.1. Sexism

The characteristic of inequality between male and female in the movie can be clearly detected. Sexist attitudes are mostly committed by men of both races and are addressed directly to female characters. Therefore, the views of female inferiority as common natural phenomenon in society result to the absence of

opportunity for these African-American women. In consequence, they might not be able to expand their roles in the family and the society. In fact, the unequal perception and treatments are marked by both personal and institutional sexism.

Sexism is individually committed by Mary's husband, Levi. He reveals his sexist views on Mary, responding to her decision-making to be female engineer. He is not precisely sure that Mary is able to be one. The uncertainty of Levi is illustrated in the conversation below.

Levi: A female engineer? We're Negro, baby. Ain't no such thing. Understand it.
 Mary: It's not like that there, Levi.
 Levi: You can't apply for freedom. Freedom is never granted to the oppressed. It's got to be demanded. Taken.
 (*Hidden Figures*, 00:33:40-00:33:54)

It can be perceived that Levi underestimates Mary when he asks Mary whether she really wants to be female engineer or not. However, there is another perception reflected by Levi's words, underscoring the concern of their race. Levi doubts her decision because he assumes that as African-American, there is no opportunity available. He sees black people's status as minority in the white-privileged society as obstacles which they cannot ever avoid and solve because it is the basis of American society. In short, Levi is conscious about the double burden of being black and being female. Levi's empathetic attitudes towards Mary is a form of mixed viewpoints of sexism and racism.

Other sexist belief expressed by the male character is received by Kathrine. When she first meets Colonel Jim Johnson, she cannot prevent the undervalued thoughts and treatments relating to African-American women's sex. This dialogue below depicts Colonel Jim's narrow perspective on women.

Jim: Pastor mentioned you're a computer at NASA.
 Kathrine: Yes.
 Jim: What's that entail?
 Kathrine: We calculate the mathematics necessary to enable launch and landing for the space program.
 Jim: That's pretty heady stuff.
 Kathrine: Yes, it is.
 Jim: They let women handle that sort of.. That's not what i mean.
 (*Hidden Figures*, 00:36:14-00:36:36)

By the end of conversation, Colonel Jim unintentionally throws statement insulting Kathrine. When Kathrine explains what she engages in as human computer NASA, Jim responds to it in skeptical manner. He finds it unusual for institution to employ women to do such difficult jobs. That is to say that personal sexism committed by Colonel Jim manifests in social interaction which goes along with clumsy gestures. It can be assumed that being black male also gives Colonel Jim the chance to perform sexism in which it indicates that African-American women are at the bottom of societal hierarchy.

Inequality based on gender in the movie is also executed by institutions. Thus, the female characters have to confront such problem in more general circumstances. NASA as the institution owned by the United States government inevitably commits to sexism. This can be proved by the dialogue between Kathrine, Al Harrison, and Paul Stafford concerning the rules of NASA's important meeting.

Paul: And she is a woman. There is no protocol for a woman attending these meetings.
 Mr. Harrison: Okay, I get that part, Paul. But within this wall, who makes the rules?
 Kathrine: You, sir. You are the boss. You just have to act like one, Sir.
 Mr. Harrison: You keep quiet.
 (*Hidden Figures*, 01:21:50-01:22:15)

The conflicted dialogue between three of them emphasizes on the meeting's attendance permission. As the launching program of John Glenn's orbital mission approaches, Kathrine is supposed to work hard in calculating the mathematics. However, Kathrine's calculations are repeatedly wasted due to the perpetual change of the project information. In response to the problem, Kathrine insists to attend Pentagon briefings so that she can keep up with the recent change. However, Paul strictly resists her request because the protocol does not authorize woman to be part of it. Through Paul's statement, it can be clearly seen that sexism is institutionalized in NASA office. Its systematic rule is designed to limit or even obviate women's opportunity to become more salient in society. The problematic issue of sexism which appears in institution is confronted by Mary as well. As she succeeds to enroll in white-majority school, she finds that the institution promotes sexism. This can be seen from the dialogue below.

Mary: I'm Mary Jackson. I'm enrolled.

Teacher: Well, the curriculum is not designed for teaching a woman.

(*Hidden Figures*, 01:31:13-01:31:20)

By seeing at the conversation between the teacher and Mary, it can be concluded that sexism is institutionalized in education field as well. It obviously aims to keep women in mediocrity so that they cannot gain equal status or even they cannot exceed the men. Thus, the male-dominated principle is maintained in society and continually becomes the very basic foundation.

4.2.1.2. Racism

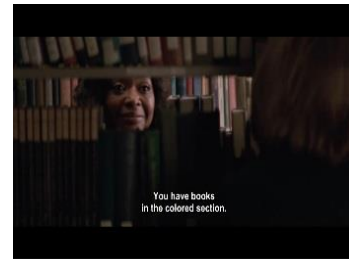
As previously stated in literary review, racism can be expressed by individual or institution in which the female characters struggle to face in the form of stereotype, prejudice, and discrimination.



Picture 4.25 The colored computers walking outside the building (01:28:10)



Picture 4.26 The existing gap between white and black women (00:38:41)



Picture 4.27 Dorothy talking to strange white woman in library (00:49:51)

In general, NASA obviously imbeds racism as their culture which is influenced by the law enforcement applied by government in the 1960s. It legitimates segregation between whites and blacks in every aspects. This can be proved by seeing at the Picture 4.25 using extreme long shot and eye level angle. It shows Dorothy and other black computers walking outside the area of West Computing Group. The building is a segregated office which is exclusively used by colored computers. Additionally, Picture 4.26 which is also taken in eye level angle. Extreme long shot is purposely used to picture the general workplace environment which conveys slight illustration about the discrimination towards African-American women. It exposes the inharmonious relationship between white women and African-American women as they do not interact with one another and the gap between them exists.

Dorothy Vaughan personally faces racist problem at NASA. The oppressive system does not let African-Americans to be as equal as whites by getting permanent job. Dorothy strives for getting official title as supervisor. She requires a promotion to be supervisor with decent salary as she has already been the one who does the job but she is paid off only a little.

Dorothy: Mrs. Mitchell, if I could.. My application for supervisor, ma'am.
I was just wondering if they're still considering me for that position

Vivian: Well, the official word is no. they're not assigning a permanent supervisor for the colored group
(*Hidden Figures*, 00:12:02-00:12:18)

The response of Vivian Mitchell is unpleasant as she explains that her application is rejected due to the colored people employment designed for only temporary position. This form of institutional racism intersects with classism as the office regulations are associated with economic system. It prompts to the disproportions of African-Americans' life because it generates lower income status and aberration in the workplace which relegates them to the unstable economic condition or even poverty, rising the stereotype as lower class people and keeping them at the bottom rank of social class.

Personal racism which is recognized by prejudice and discrimination perpetrated by white also happens to Dorothy. Picture 4.27 in close-up and eye level angle illustrates Dorothy talking with strange white women in the city center library. This white woman impolitely asks Dorothy presence in that place and accuses her for intending to cause problem. It reflects the prejudice as she feels uncomfortable and perceives African-American women as a threat for whites and the accusation towards Dorothy is a manifestation of discriminatory acts.

4.2.1.3. Classism



Picture 4.28 The employee giving Dorothy garbage can (00:16:51)



Picture 4.29 Kathrine's reaction to the man (00:16:55)



Picture 4.30 People throwing odd gaze at Kathrine (00:17:02)

The conception, judgment, and action formed in injustice based on one's class as well as economic status deemed as classism is also depicted in the movie. Black female characters, specifically Kathrine, deal with this kind of treatment formed in personal and institutional practices.

Picture 4.28 shows Kathrine and white employee interact with one another. It is taken with medium long shot and eye level angle. The facial expression of Kathrine is shot in close-up as Kathrine's unbelievable reaction to the man's humiliating act is pictured in Picture 4.29. However, it does not stop with the man because people at the room keep starrng at Kathrine as she walks by. Picture 4.30 which uses medium long shot and eye level angle captures everyone's reaction to Kathrine's presence. People throw their squinted gaze on her, illustrating strange feeling towards her. It turns out that the man and the people probably think the typical negative stereotype. The interaction between them and the people's reaction are regarded as classism as the man puts the garbage can to Kathrine's box. One sure thing about this portrayal is that they directly judge Kathrine as office janitor.

In other words, by only seeing at Kathrine's race, they conclude that she is ascribed to lower class or working class status. In short, the intersection of race and class results to the stereotype of black people clinging to white's mind as economically deprived and poor-educated, reflecting the characteristics of lower class.

As a matter of fact, the intersection of classism, sexism, and racism is fundamentally institutionalized in NASA. The monologue below pervades the fact that Kathrine encounters three inevitable problems at once.

Kathrine: My uniforms. Skirt below my knees, my heels, and a simple string of pearls. Well, I don't own pearls. Lord knows you don't pay coloreds enough to afford pearls and I work like a dog, day and night.

(*Hidden Figures*, 01:02:09-01:02:24)

Kathrine's confession to Al Harrison in front of white men colleagues comprises the oppressive actions she endures while working at Space Task Group. She condemns the mistreatments perpetrated by the institution in teary eyes. She breaks the silence by saying blatantly about the standards of African-American women's working appearance which differ from white women in the office, restricting her to wear skirt over the knees and not allowing her to put on fancy jewelry. More importantly, the economic oppression in the form of pay gap and employee exploitation are also revealed as she is paid off unfairly because existing racial discrimination she has been objected to. All occurrences provoke the economic instability of African-American women, denying the opportunity to acquire more access in the aspects of social, economic, and educational life.

4.2.2. Black Feminism

The analysis points of black feminism undertake the ideas of African-American women's resistances and responses to the experiences they encounter as minority. To begin with, it must be acknowledged that black feminism has to do something with the individuals with some characteristics that label them as black feminists.

As the black female characters, Kathrine, Dorothy, and Mary, are perpetually oppressed by sexism, racism, and classism, they can be characterized as black feminist. They completely possess the characteristics of black feminist by considering about their race, their sex, and their experiences. In the following analysis, they implement the beliefs and thoughts of black feminist formed in black solidarity and African-American women's orientation.

4.2.2.1 Black women's Relationship with One Another

In this movie, black women's relationship with one another can be easily recognized as the characters are highly supportive to other African-American women in everything they engage. They have strong bond, respectful manner, and valuation towards one another in which the affirmation of black women as sisters and friends promotes black women's importance, humanity, and right to exist. Thus, these characteristics are regarded as the foundation of African-American women empowerment.

As a matter of fact, Kathrine manifests her recognition about the value of African-American women which is detected in her statement responding to Jim's

sexist belief towards African-American women. The monologue below is a proof that she overrates the status and the ability of colored computers.

Kathrine: There are 20 bright, highly capable Negro women in the West Computing Group. And we're proud to be doing our part for the country. So yes, they let women do some things at NASA, Mr. Johnson. And it's not because we wear skirts. It's because we wear glasses.

(Hidden Figures 00:37:16-00:37:31)

By acknowledging about the profession of African-American women at NASA, she presents defense and advocacy as she perceives that all African-American women experience sexist subjection, thus she needs to show the value of African-American women and respects them as well. The event illustrates the black women's relationship with another formed in self-definition and self-valuation. In addition, Dorothy is taken into account in presenting sisterhood and promoting the empowerment of African-American women. This can be seen from the dialogue between Dorothy and Vivian Mitchell.

Dorothy: What about after now?

Vivian: After Glenn's launch, NASA's dissolving the computing groups.

Dorothy: I'm not accepting reassignment unless I bring my ladies with me.

Vivian: Excuse me?

Dorothy: We're gonna need a lot of manpower to program that beast. I can't do it alone. My gals are ready. They can do the work.

(Hidden Figures, 01:26:59-01:27:24)

The conversation above discusses about Dorothy's promotion as IBM programmer at the main office. Nevertheless, it emerges that she supposes to leave behind other colored computers in West Computing Group. Thereafter, NASA eventually will not involve black women in calculating jobs anymore, leading to the dismissal of colored computers. Responding to Mrs. Mitchell request, Dorothy persistently refuses the promotion because she wants the colored computers get the

same jobs as Dorothy. Later on, Dorothy's demand is accepted by NASA. Dorothy and other black women resign from the jobs as computers and get official position as programmer. As consequence, she is bestowed a title as NASA's first African-American supervisor. It comes to the finding that Dorothy empowers African-American women as she deeply imbeds the principle of black women solidarity.

4.2.2.2. Consciousness as a Sphere of Freedom

Raising consciousness is fundamentally needed by black feminists, so that they can grow some thoughts concerning the rights for gaining equal status and for opposing the principle of male domination, racial and class hierarchy.

4.2.2.2.1 The Importance of Self-Definition

Self-definition is a part of increasing awareness towards oneself. This kind of self-orientation can be found in Mary's traits. In one occasion, Mary gets the opportunity to be an engineer by applying Engineer training program suggested by the head engineer, Mr. Zlelinski. However, Mary shows her uncertainty to him because it seems impossible for her to be one. She highlights the matters of her sex and her race. Thereafter, the following dialogue illustrates Mary redefines herself.

Mr. Zlelinski: Let me ask you. If you were a white male, would you wish to be an engineer?

Mary: I wouldn't have to. I'd already be one.

(Hidden Figures, 00:15:39-00:15:47)

Mr. Zlelinski renders assumption about the status of Mary as a white man that will still generate the willingness to be an engineer. Responding to his question, Mary answers it assuredly that she does not have to be ungrateful and upset about

her race and her sex. Rather, she has the power to convince herself that she will be African-American engineer in which at that time, it is beyond the bounds of possibility. Through her statement, she seems fully confident by knowing who she is. She is also aware of her identities, but she labels herself for being capable to transcend the confines of social construction that limits her capacity as black woman.

4.2.2.2.2. Self-Valuation and Respect

As the status of African-American women at the bottom rank of society, the subjections carried out by whites and black male ensue undervaluation and dishonorableness towards them. However, one characteristic of black feminists is to provoke the thoughts about the value of their selves they are not granted in society.

Such situation hits Kathrine as she receives sexist views about her and other African-American women. After Sunday praying at the church, Kathrine meets Colonel Jim and has conversation about the jobs Kathrine doing at NASA. It turns out that Jim looks down on Kathrine. He doubts Kathrine's ability and job position at NASA, implying that he does not respect and value her. Thereafter, Kathrine's reaction to his comment is shown in the dialogue below.

Kathrine: What do you mean?

Jim: I'm just surprised that something so...taxing.

Kathrine: Mr. Johnson, if I were you, I'd quit talking right now.

Jim: I didn't mean no disrespect.

Kathrine: I will have you know. I was the first Negro female student at West Virginia University Graduate School. On any given day, I analyze the manometer levels for air displacement, friction, and velocity,

and compute over 10.000 calculations by cosine, square root, and lately, analytic geometry by hand.
(*Hidden Figures*, 00:36:40-00:37:14)

In a nutshell, Kathrine does not accept Jim's sexist perception on her and other African-American women. Thus, she elaborates her competency and astonishing lifetime achievements that she got. For Jim, he cannot say anything, but knocked out. This depiction shows that Kathrine highly praises herself. It reflects the state of mind of Kathrine that settles on the value of herself and the respect for herself. In addition, by telling Jim her accomplishment, she opposes the belief of women's inferiority. Also, she does not let anyone define and underestimate her. More importantly, she needs to be respected.

4.2.2.2.3. Self-Reliance and Independence

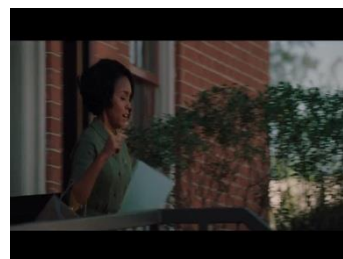
Black woman independency is evidently undeniable. As a matter of fact, this black feminist' thought carried out by African-American women is deemed as natural traits or obtained from the influence of their circumstances. Regardless, the representation can be seen clearly in Mary in which it reckons with her characteristics as fearless and confident woman who strongly believes in what she aspires to.



Picture 4.31 Mary
registering for petition
(00:58:17)



Picture 4.32 Mary attending
the court trial
(01:10:48)



Picture 4.33 Mary's happy
reaction
(01:12:13)

In this case, Mary faces obstacles in the workplace that tempt her self-reliance. She is supposed to take courses in white school so that she can acquire her degree in engineering. The title is one of the requirements for applying engineering training program. It is regarded as an impossible goal as the state laws do not allow black woman to enroll. However, this barrier does not hamper her way to become a female engineer. Thus, she counts on herself to make it possible by making petition to the court. This can be seen from Picture 4.31 which is shot in medium close up. Mary struggles for her rights and seeks for opportunity by coming to the court, registering herself to get the schedule. This action reflects that Mary is able to take on her own decision because she has a sense of direction.

Thereafter, in Picture 4.32 which is taken in medium shot. This shot shows the sequences in the courtroom when Mary negotiates with the judge. She confidently convinces him to grant her wish by saying it will be so important for being the first African-American female engineer. By seeing from the angle of the pictures, low angle shot is chosen by the director that indicates the strong and powerful state of a person in which Mary brings up to the audience.

Picture 4.33 shot in medium close up and eye level angle showing her satisfaction on the result that the petition is approved but with one precondition she can only attend the night classes. All happenings portraying Mary's steps in reaching their goal are deemed as the manifestation of self-reliance and independency. As she deals with the court thing by herself, she is aware that the key of achieving the goal is to rely on and stay true to her belief as she sticks to personal principles and goals to make the impossible possible.

4.2.2.2.4. Self, Change, and Personal Empowerment

Black feminist thought also points on the awareness of the black woman about the contradiction and the dysfunction that exist in society. In response to this case, she is willing to change herself or to alter the situation. As consequence, this will bring them to beneficial actions that she establishes self-empowerment or she empowers other African-American women.

The attitudes of self-empowerment in the movie are represented by Mary and Kathrine in which both women succeed in changing the obstructing situation to a better one. When Mary is persistent about her dream to be an engineer, Levi does not seem to act supportive but rather he throws sexist and racist viewpoints on her. By responding to Levi's discouraging attitudes, Mary keeps insisting that his point of view is wrong. The conversation below presents Mary's self-empowerment.

Mary: You better settle down, Levi Jackson. Unless you want this female's mind, right here, in front of everybody.

Levi: All I'm saying, don't play the fool. I don't wanna see you get hurt. NASA's never ever given you guys your due. Having a couple of extra degrees ain't gonna changes that. Civil rights ain't always civil.
(*Hidden Figures*, 00:34:16-00:34:36)

Mary's reaction to Levi's explanation about the small chance of becoming female engineer represents that she can also be intimidating. It designates the strong belief that nothing can prevent her to get what she wants and she will do anything to make it happen. Later on, she proves that her efforts are not in vain because she can attend Hampton High School. This can be seen from Picture 4.34 which is taken

in medium shot, picturing her sitting among white male students in the class and low angle, indicating that the psychological strength of her in a bizarre situation.

Mary's next achievement is pictured in Picture 4.35 which uses medium long shot and eye level angle. It illustrates Mary's graduation which is celebrated by Kathrine and Dorothy. Furthermore, the peak of Mary's success is that she acquires the title as NASA's and America's black woman aeronautical engineer. The rare events are proofs that Mary improves her life by preserving self-knowledge as a part of her self-empowerment.



Picture 4.34 Mary studying among white male students (01:31:44)



Picture 4.35 Mary graduating (01:57:40)



Picture 4. 36 Kathrine Arguing with Mrs. Harrison and Paul (01:22:02)

Kathrine also performs actions that change the situation in NASA office as a result of the increasing consciousness towards the oppression she endures in Space Task Group. One occasion happens when Al Harrison finds out her habits in being absent at the office for every forty minutes a day. Then, it turns out that she needs to run half a mile to go to colored bathroom. The aftermath of this revelation is a confession of Kathrine's oppression addressed to the institution which is portrayed in the monolog below.

Kathrine: There is no bathroom. There are no colored bathrooms in this building or any building outside the West Campus, which is half a mile away. Did you know that? I have to walk to Timbuktu just to relieve myself and I can't use one of the handy bikes. Picture that, Mr. Harrison. My uniforms. Skirt below my knees, my heels, and a simple string of pearls. Well, I don't own pearls. Lord knows

you don't pay coloreds enough to afford pearls. And I work like a dog, day and night, living off of coffee from a pot none of you wanna touch.

(*Hidden Figures*, 01:01:50-01:02:38)

Her words are perfectly clear concerning about what she encounters as the only black woman working at white male majority office. The awakening process of Kathrine is stimulated and then it bursts into emotional confession. She is fully aware of the institutionalized sexism, racism, and classism perpetrated towards her by saying about the segregation of bathroom, the standards of black woman's appearance, the racial discrimination, and the wage gap. As consequence, Mr. Harrison destroys the colored bathroom board in the West Computing Group in front of all black computers and white employees. It can be assumed that through Kathrine's utterance, the situation alters subsequently so that she will not find problems about the exclusion of African-American women in the office sphere.

Furthermore, Kathrine happens to cope with the advanced institutional sexism as she is prevented to attend the meeting with other superintendence. Picture 4.36 which uses medium long shot and eye level angle illustrates Kathrine having conversation with Mr. Harrison and Paul that leads to conflict. Three of them argue about the meeting protocols that do not give women permission to attend the meeting. However, Kathrine with her self-confidence keeps persisting and convincing that she will be so helpful for the meeting. Thereafter, it turns out that Mr. Harrison grants her requests because he is settled to the view that Kathrine is completely reliable. In short, because of a changed consciousness which is marked by Kathrine's anger, she demands respect and rights of justice that soon alter to the better condition in the office and the improvement of her status.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

African-American women are identified as one of the most underprivileged human beings in society as a result of European colonization of America since the very beginning of their arrivals as slaves. Such situation brings them to intolerable injustices because of the state of being black and being woman. As consequence, the life of African-American women is familiar with the oppression formed in sexism, racism, and classism. Those contemptuous treatments are solely constructed to maintain patriarchy and to privilege whites. More importantly, the inequalities are supported by both individual and institutional practices. Thus, the term black feminism occurs as a response to the African-American women subjection. Black feminism is the thought that involves the awareness of the existence of sexism, racism, and classism thus ones who embrace it commit to fight the suppression and empower other women so that equality grows within the society. Furthermore, ones can be considered as black feminist as long as they are all women who experience living as blacks and possess black feminist thought. This thought encompasses the consciousness as a sphere of freedom, which is elaborated to self-definition, self-valuation and respect, self-reliance and independence, self, change and empowerment. Black women's relationship with one another is also counted in shaping the thought.

Hidden Figures depicts the female characters as black feminists. The consideration is proved by the characteristics of black feminist that Kathrine,

Dorothy, and Mary are born with as African-American women who experience the intersection of sexism, racism, and classism. The treatments are committed by either individual or NASA as governmental institution where they work. By personal, it means they receive mistreatments from both white male and female as well as black male. However, they respond it with consciousness-raising to resist white and male domination. Each character differently performs the orientation of self and the black women solidarity. Thereafter, it turns out that they mostly portray the manifestation of self-change and women empowerment formed in black women solidarity because they successfully alter to better situation. It ensues them to achieve their goals that are considered impossible for African-American women in the era of 1960s.

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